

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, CB, UY

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR ASYLUM FOR CAMBODIANS

REFS: A) MVD 1229; B) STATE 84161; C) STATE 90733

1. PARA 2 REFTEL C ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF GOU FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GKR OFFICIALS AND DEPENDENTS IN URUGUAY. WE BELIEVE THROUGH AMBASSADOR ROMERO'S CALL THE GOU WAS REFLECTING HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS AND EXTENDING SYMPATHY BUT NOT IMPLYING MONETARY ASSISTANCE. THIS COUNTRY IS SUFFERING SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, INCLUDING AN INFLATION WHICH EXCEEDED 100 PER CENT LAST YEAR, AND IS HARD PRESSED TO MEET THE DEMANDS AND NEEDS OF ITS OWN PEOPLE WHO SUFFER PRIVATION, MUCH LESS THOSE OF KHMER REPRESENTATIVES. ANY HELP WHICH MIGHT EMERGE WOULD BE LITTLE MORE THAN TOKEN AND NOT SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF PROBLEM INVOLVED. THE CAMBODIANS ARE NOT LIVING EXTRAVAGANTLY BUT MANY OF THEIR CHILDREN ARE IN THE BRITISH SCHOOL AND TUITION IS EXPENSIVE. WE SEE NO WAY THESE COULD BE COVERED FROM LOCAL RESOURCES AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS WOULD BE NO SOLUTION FOR MANY REASONS, INCLUDING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER.

2. THE UNHCR IS NOT REPRESENTED IN URUGUAY. HOWEVER, WE ARE MEETING TODAY (APRIL 23) WITH AMBASSADOR ONG AND WILL SUGGEST THAT HE APPROACH ICEM ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE. THE RESULTS OF HIS APPROACH WILL BE REPORTED.

3. WE BELIEVE IT TOTALLY UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THE RED CROSS OR
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ANY OTHER LOCAL VOLUNTEER AGENCY TO HELP THESE PEOPLE UNLESS

THEY BECOME DISTITUTE AND ARE REDUCED TO SOUP KITCHEN-TYPE HAND-OUTS. WELFARE AGENCIES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, HAVE LIMITED RESOURCES AND ARE IN A CONSTANT STRUGGLE TO MEET URGENT NEEDS OF THE URUGUAYAN POOR AND AFFLICTED.

4. WE DO NOT KNOW THE SITUATION OF CAMBODIANS ELSEWHERE BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THE ONLY PRACTICAL INITIAL STEP IN THIS CASE TO BE RELOCATION IN THE U.S. FIRST, AS DETAILED IN REFTEL A, SOME HAVE LIVED AT LENGTH IN THE U.S. , ONE FAMILY'S ONLY COMMON LANGUAGE IS ENGLISH, ETC. SECOND, BARRING UNFORSEEN DEVELOPMENTS IN PHNOM PENH, THESE PEOPLE CONSIDER THEMSELVES POLITICAL ASYLEES WHO CANNOT GO HOME AND THEY HAVE REQUESTED ASYLUM FROM US. THIRD, AND THIS AUGMENTS THE PURELY HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF THE MATTER, IN THE ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE HELP FROM US THE PLIGHT OF THESE PEOPLE WILL INEVITABLY BECOME PUBLIC, AS WOULD THE FAILURE OF THE U.S. TO HELP THEM AND ESPECIALLY TO ACCEPT THEM AS REFUGEES. THE IMAGE OF THE U.S., NOT TO MENTION THE ATTITUDE OF THE AFFECTED PERSONS, COULD NOT HELP BUT SUFFER AS IT IS ASSOCIATED WITH CONCERNS ALREADY FELT HERE ABOUT THE U.S. FAILURE TO PROVIDE THE KIND OF AID FOR CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM WHICH THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH SOUGHT AND WHICH HERE AT LEAST WAS VIEWED NOT ONLY AS RIGHT BUT ALSO, PROBABLY, AS AN OBLIGATION. THUS, WE URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER RESETTLEMENT IN THE U.S. IN ITS PLANNING AS WELL AS INTERIM FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SHOULD THIS BECOME NECESSARY PRIOR TO RELOCATING AS IT PROBABLY WILL WITHIN SEVERAL WEEKS AT MOST.

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